increasing feminization of agriculture and the proposed conferment of right to land ownership.

* Suggest methods of empowering male and female members of elected local bodies to discharge effectively their.role in conserving and improving the ecological foundations for sustainable agriculture, like land, water, agro-biodiversity and the atmosphere, with priority attention to irrigation water.

Mitigating drought

1604. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to formulate comprehensive action plan for eradication/mitigation of drought in the rainfed areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of evaluation of programmes launched for drought proofing all these years; and

(d) the special features of New National Policy for drought proofing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Consistent with provisions of the National Agriculture Policy as given below in reply to part (d) of the Question, the following programmes being implemented by the Government of India are contributing to the mitigation of drought in the rainfed areas:

A. Ministry of Rural Development

(i) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP)

(ii) Desert Development Programme (DDP)

(iii) Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IDWP)

B. Ministry of Agriculture

(i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA)

(c) Different evaluation studies conducted to assess the impact of NWDPRA have concluded that, in the evaluated watersheds, there was general increase in ground water recharge, number of wells and water bodies, cropping intensity, yields of crops, reduction in soil losses and changes in cropping patterns. As regards the impact of DPAP, the evaluation studies show that there is general increase in productivity of land, water table level and availability of fuel wood and fodder.

(d) The National Agriculture Policy being followed in the Government of India since July, 2000 in respect of 'Flood and Drought Management' provides:

"In order to reduce risk in agriculture and impart greater resilience to Indian agriculture against droughts and floods, efforts will be made for achieving greater flood proofing of flood prone agriculture and drought proofing of rainfed agriculture for protecting the farmers from vagaries of nature. For this purpose, contengency agriculture planning, development of drought and flood resistant crop varieties, watershed development programmes, drought prone areas and desert development programmes and rural infrastructure development programmes will receive particular attention".

Task Force on micro irrigation

1605. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 65 given in Rajya Sabha on the 9th July, 2004 and state:

(a) Government's response to the report submitted by Task Force Committee on micro irrigation;

(b) what are the salient features of the report; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken for the encouragement of micro irrigation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Task Force on Micro Irrigation in its Report submitted to the Central Government has recommended for covering three million ha. under micro irrigation in the country during the Tenth Plan and another 14 million ha. during the Eleventh Plan. According